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THE following able article by a Correspondent of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, July, 1865, on a subject now greatly agitating the public mind, is worthy of the careful perusal of every American, whether advocate or opponent of Negro Suffrage.

THE RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE.

PERMIT me to offer a few thoughts on a subject now engaging much of public attention, and in reference to which correct conclusions are of vital importance. To reach such conclusions it is indispensable, explicitly or implicitly, to keep in view a distinction which, however abstract it may appear to be, is as real as any other, and cannot be ignored without confusion of thought and mischief in practice. I mean that between the *Nation* and the *State*, or between an assemblage of human beings, usually of the same race, held together by gregarious tendencies or forces, common to man and all other living creatures, and the same aggregate, held together by a creative or organized force possessed by man alone, and by means of which such aggregate is formed into a regularly organized body, having a definite character as a whole. For the sake of distinction, the former may be called a *natural* and the latter an *artificial* state of society; though as resulting from those superior powers distinguishing man from the brute, but which are equally with all others a gift of the Creator, the latter state is really as natural as the former. Man, however, actually creates the state, while he does not the nation, and the distinction of natural and artificial may therefore stand as appropriate. Nevertheless, both co-exist and always have co-existed, there never having been a time in the history of mankind when

both forces were not in operation among the same people, though one or the other may have greatly predominated. Sometimes the political or artificial force almost wholly overpowers the social or natural, as in the Grecian republics; at other times the latter so predominates that, as the expression goes, "Society is resolved into its natural elements." In the nation, the individual is known simply as the man or woman, or *yeoman*; in the State, as the *citizen*.

Now, the man, by virtue of being a living creature, with the earth as his temporary abode, is "endowed by his Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Without these, the great end of his existence would be unattainable. All living creatures, even the lowest, possess the same natural rights. But man, as a *human* being, and in his capacity of *citizen*, has higher rights which he does not share with lower creatures. One of these, unquestionably, is a *voice* or influence in the affairs of State, since the individual is an element, usually, of the political organism—a part, having the same nature as the whole—and the enjoyment of his natural rights greatly depending upon the proper exercise of his political or civil rights. There never was a government, however despotic, in which the influence of every citizen was not productive of some effect, however slight, hidden, or seemingly non-existent.

This voice, influence or suffrage, is a governmental function, and the extent and manner of its exercise necessarily depends upon the form of government, or distinctive character of the political organism. In despotisms there is no prescribed mode for its manifestation. In limited monarchies, suffrage is provided for, though varying greatly in the extent of its direct and sanctioned exercise. In our Government, professing to be founded upon the "consent of the governed"—to be, indeed, a government *of* the people, through a representative, and not a purely democratic government—suffrage, or the *elective franchise*, is all but universal. There has already been assigned sufficient reasons for its non exercise by women and children, though their influence is indirectly felt through the medium of husbands and fathers. The absorbing question, in the present altered condi-

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tion of our political affairs, is, shall the emancipated black race be permitted to exercise the elective franchise? We have restored to them, as we suppose, their "heaven descended" natural rights; shall we give to them, here and among ourselves, the political right of suffrage, or make them a part of the political, as they confessedly are a part of the national body? Never before, perhaps, has a question of more vital importance been presented to the American people for decision. Its magnitude and far-reaching relations are scarcely, at least not generally, appreciated. Let us briefly examine some of its most salient points only, since that is all that can here be attempted.

It has just been said that the nation is made up of human beings *usually* of the same race. This fact greatly conduces to the welfare of the people in numberless ways; and the State being for the most part an organization of the nation, sameness of race promotes unity of both. This sameness, however, does not always exist, though where the differences are comparatively slight, and the races are what we term *cognate*, their intermingling is productive of happy effects; as in England, for instance, when the Saxons, Danes, Angles and Normans, all from the great Teutonic stock, have united to form one of the finest races in the world. Yet, among Englishmen, traces of distinct races are still perceptible, showing the all pervading influence of blood. The Celtic and Teutonic races, on the contrary, have never kindly mingled, though for ages existing side by side, and sometimes under the same government, as, for example, the English and Irish. So omnipotent is blood, or, if we please, nationality, that it can neither be obliterated, nor can two different kinds harmoniously unite under the same political organization; the artificial cannot destroy the natural. Hence, all history shows us that where two or more races inhabit the same territory, one will generally obtain the political ascendancy; the others, though enjoying, it may be, their natural rights, remaining politically in subjection. Witness the numerous layers, if we may so speak, of populations in India, the Aryan race holding the political power to the exclusion of all other races. So in China, the Tartar rule prevailing over the more numerous aboriginal races, and maintaining its power in spite of a long-continued rebellion.

Long after the conquest of Mexico and Peru by the Spaniards, they governed those countries, though but a handful in comparison with the native populations.

These, and the like, are great facts in political history, and should not be thrown aside as of no weight in settling the question of suffrage now upon us. It would seem to be a law of nature that the State should be composed of homogeneous elements, and that what is alien and heterogeneous, though existing in the nation, should be excluded from the political organism. Could one, by a simple enactment on the statute book, or a constitutional provision, do away with the influence of blood, the State might be reorganized on the basis of universal suffrage, to the immediate advantage of the country. But the negro race is alien to the Teutonic or Celtic; more so than any which could be named as ever likely to be among us; more so than the aboriginal races, with which a bitter experience has taught us we can never assimilate under the same government. It is not simply on account of color or other sensible quality, that the white and black races can never become assimilated, but because there are outward indications of innumerable inward incompatibilities, of irreconcilable differences, of insurmountable antipathies. Neither is it for want of intelligence or of moral worth that the negro should be excluded from political power, but because, admitting the possession of these to as great an extent as among an equal number of whites, there is an inherent heterogeneity of blood, of mind and body, which the possession of these would only tend to aggravate and develope. None pretend to believe for a moment that the negro can exist on the same *social* level with the whites in the same community; that he can be admitted to our firesides and tables as an equal; or that he can intermarry with our children and relations; or, in short, that there can ever be an amalgamation of the two races. If there are any who believe this to be possible, to them there can be nothing in the way of political equality.

I can only say to such, that should the possibility ever be thoroughly tested, their creed would probably undergo a rapid change. Until we are ready to accept social equality, we should deliberate long before we grant political equality. It may be said

that the former will not necessarily follow as a consequence of the latter. Very true : because there are ineradicable tendencies in the very depths of our nature which would render social equality impossible, in spite of legal enactments, conclusions of reason or persuasives of benevolence. But that which would follow as the inevitable consequence of any attempt to bring about social equality (and suffrage would be such an attempt) would be interminable dissensions, arising from countless modes of interference, assuming every variety of shape, and being productive of every manner of evil. In short, there would be a war of races, never ending until one or the other should be exterminated.

But the negro race is among us. We need not stop to inquire how they came, to what extent they have multiplied, or by whose fault they have been so long denied their natural rights as human beings. These rights we may now proudly say are, or are about to be, restored to them. Shall we on this account go further, and bestow on them political rights? There is no logical connection between the two, and there never was a graver error than to maintain the contrary, as many well intentioned and intelligent persons seem disposed to do. The emancipation of the blacks in the United States is the great event of the age ; it is a triumph of humanity over brutishness, of civilization over barbarism ; and as a Christian community we may well glory in the accomplishment of so good a work. But it behooves us to be careful that in the regeneration of the State we do not commit the error of our fathers in its generation. They vainly hoped that slavery, as an admitted element (though not by name), would die out of the political system, leaving few traces of a hurtful kind. We know too well what consequences have resulted from this fatal compromise between two antagonistic principles. Let us not from a similar want of prescience, from any fancied necessity of the moment, from a mistaken philanthropy, or from any other cause, fall into even a graver error. To all natural rights the negro is justly entitled. In the full enjoyment of these the Federal Government owes it to itself, to the world, and to the common Father of all, to protect him. No law to protect and maintain these rights should be permitted to exist in any State, making any discrimination on account of color or race. We even

justly owe to the negro a greater measure of protection at first than to the whites, since by our own connivance and wrong we have rendered him, through ignorance and habit, less capable of protecting and caring for himself. And we, furthermore, owe him this fuller protection since we cannot grant him the rights and power of citizenship. It is unfortunate that the lasting welfare of both races demands this withholding of political rights; that long since this the negro has not been placed in a country of his own; but it is useless to lament the unwelcome fact; we must accept and meet it manfully.

This political disfranchisement, however, is not a new thing in our government, and much less is it so in other governments. All foreigners seeking a home among us are subject to it for five years after their arrival, and for three after declaring their intention to become citizens, and in the opinion of many intelligent men the period should be much longer. Yet from the moment they land upon our shores, even if they never intend to, and never do become citizens, they are protected in the enjoyment of all their natural rights. In England, boasting of her free Constitution, the vast majority of her people have no political franchise, have no direct voice whatever in shaping political measures, and yet they glory in the protection meted out to the meanest subject of the realm. In other European countries the disfranchisement is still more complete, and yet the people are protected in their rights in a very large degree. It is true, there is an irrepressible desire in the human breast for the possession of political as well as natural rights, and to gratify that desire thousands yearly flock to our shores. Nevertheless, and in spite of disfranchisement, the people of a country never cease to have an influence in the government. The blacks exercised this influence in slavery, not because their wishes were consulted, but because their powers and capacities—their whole nature—being in the midst of us, affected, chiefly through their masters, the legislation and other political action of the government, and pervaded (certainly not for good) the whole social as well as political fabric at the South. As strong an influence, but a far healthier kind, though at best not desirable, would be operative on the white race were the blacks, like the unnaturalized foreigner, endowed with all natural rights,

but denied the elective franchise. But the influence would always be like that of an element foreign to the body politic, and of hurtful kind; not as hurtful as in slavery, but still hurtful. The German, the Irishman, and the Frenchman may be naturalized in fact as well as in law, for they are comparatively near of kin to us.

In a few generations, a close amalgamation may take place, though under the most favorable circumstances, many generations are required to perfect this amalgamation, and leave no traces of original blood. But the negro race would never become naturalized in the same way. Were amalgamation possible and general, it would be at an expense of a debasement of the higher traits of which we now boast. There would be no pride in the anticipation of such a result and nothing but evil in its fruition.

It is impertinent to say, as some of our best men have said, that, because the negro has fought by the side of the whites, he is therefore entitled, like them, to a voice in shaping the regenerated political organism. As before said, there is no logical connection between the two. This war was not waged in the interest of a dynasty, or of any particular form of government, but to preserve the life of the nation. The whites fought and bled for that end and so did the blacks. Both had the same grand object in view, but with this single difference, that the white man fought to *maintain* the rights he had long enjoyed, while the black man fought to *acquire* the same rights, but which he had never enjoyed.

Now that the great national end is attained, the best good of both races demands, that their future political course should be different.

Neither is it pertinent to say that because the negro has proved himself capable of directing the bullet he is therefore as capable of properly directing the ballot. This is not a question of capability, but of consanguinity, of harmonious action in a political organism. Admitting capability in the highest degree on the part of the negro, it only furnishes the stronger reason why he should be excluded from political equality—equality of political power. For the interests of the two races can never be one any more than their color, and as countless dissension would arise,

the equal political power of each would be wielded for antagonistic interests, and thus, as before said, an interminable war of races would ensue, and endure as long as the power by which it was waged.

And as it is not relevant to argue from the capability of the negro that he is entitled to the right of suffrage in our Government, so it is not relevant to adduce the few instances in which that right has been accorded to him, to prove that it will not be productive of the evils mentioned. The few free blacks possessing the right of suffrage have been as nothing compared with the whites residing in the same section of country. Feeling themselves elevated by the possession of this power, they have been disposed to retain the good opinion of the influential whites by so exercising it as not to stand in opposition to them, since such opposition would be injurious to their private interests; and their number has never been such as to justify open opposition, since defeat would be certain. And, more than this, the freest and most privileged blacks have never been able to divest themselves of the consciousness that their race is a degraded one in this country, a vast portion of it being in bondage; and that they themselves, though accidentally favored above their kindred, cannot divest themselves of the general degradation attaching to the whole.

But change this state of things; let the blacks know that they are the equals of the whites in political power; that equally with the whites, they are the governors as well as the governed; and give time for this to be *felt* as well as known—to become a part of ever-present consciousness, as with ourselves—then would the inherent antagonism of races become developed with all its attendant and inseparable evils. Even admitting that the great preponderance of the whites in the Northern States would be such as to render the evils endurable, and, to a great extent, controllable, it could not be so in the Southern States, the native and more congenial home of the blacks. They might be here in the majority, and directly or indirectly control the State Governments. Can it be expected that the whites in the South will submit to this, or that they *can* endure it? Never. Nor would they in the North were the circumstances reversed. It is in vain to appeal

to reason, to justice, to humanity, or to any of the better sentiments of our nature. The deep and ineradicable antagonism of race—of *kind*—would overpower, as it was designed to do, all higher but weaker considerations. Philosophers may reason as they will of the unity of race, of oneness of origin, of sameness of destination, and of the effect of similarity of condition in bringing about similarity of constitution. It matters not what might once have been in the pre-historic past, or what might still be in the far distant future, the great difference of kind is a present fact which no wise statesman should neglect. We may speak of this heterogeneity and the sentiment arising from it as a *prejudice* which we should strive to overcome. It doubtless is such in the true etymological sense, something arising in the mind independent of reason, because lying deeper than reason, and too strong for argument to overcome. If it is so powerful in India, under the name of *caste*, among a comparatively homogeneous people, and even among ourselves under the same designation of *race*, how can we ever expect to surmount the more formidable differences and antagonism between the Caucasian and Negro races? We cannot do it, and should never attempt it, by conferring on the latter political power, and thereby open the door to untold evils, which would multiply indefinitely until one or the other race was exterminated from the land.

Seeing, then, that although the elective franchise, in our happy form of government, may be regarded as a right, in one sense, as truly inalienable as the natural rights of life, liberty, property and the pursuit of happiness, (because carrying with it the power of maintaining these,) yet, that is one which, for the best good of both races, we ought not to confer upon the negro in our midst, what becomes our high and imperative duty to the emancipated but disfranchised blacks? What, in this great emergency, shall we do to complete, in the best manner, the glorious work we have begun? What does God and humanity require of us? How can we best discharge the responsibility resting upon us, and so act as to elevate both races, and afford a double asylum to the oppressed of other lands? Clearly, we must speak to them something after this manner: “You are here among us; this is the native land of most of you as it is of most of us; you have

been unjustly oppressed for generations ; you have risen up against the same cruel and aristocratic power which we have encountered, and which would have crushed out the life of the nation ; you have had the same end in view that we have had, namely, to preserve that life ; you have fought and bled by our side, and have laid down your lives as we have done in the good cause ; the dust of your loved ones mingles with that of those we loved on many a bloody battle-field ; you have triumphed with us, and with us you must enjoy the fruits of that triumph. Your natural rights must be secured to you by our action as citizens in the State. We will see to it that the laws for the preservation of these are just and equal, and that in this respect you shall be upon a perfect equality with ourselves. But neither your good nor ours will permit us to confer upon you political rights. In withholding them, we deprive you of nothing which you ever possessed. You were brought here and have been held by force, and wrongfully. You have never formed a part of the body politic, have never had a voice directly in our public affairs, for the preservation of your natural rights, therefore you cannot claim it from us. Abstractly, it may be yours, and there should be some place on God's footstool that you might call your country, and where you might exercise the right with incalculable advantage to yourselves, and your whole race ; where you might found free institutions similar to ours, and which might become a model for the black race in every part of the world." Something like this we should say to the blacks by word or action, and from this time henceforth it should be the settled and unwavering policy of our government to establish the blacks in a land of their own, and one adapted to their constitutions and habits. It can be done, difficult as it may now appear, if determinedly begun and prosecuted, for we must bear in mind that the facilities would increase in a geometrical ratio after the first complete settlement. Other nations, too, might grant us their aid, and making it the cause of humanity at large, as the suppression of the slave trade now is. We should not drive them away from us, but so order things that the young and middle-aged would, for the most part, desire to leave us, leaving after one generation but an insignificant remnant among us.

But will this ever be done? Will suffrage, kindly but firmly, be denied, and colonization ever become a settled policy of the Government? Six months ago we were engaged in a deathly struggle for national existence, the State being disorganized. We succeeded, and now comes another struggle, admitted by all to be equally, if not more difficult than the first, fully exemplifying the distinction alluded to in the commencement of this article. We are now struggling to reorganize the State under circumstances and outward conditions never before existing. The people, who a short time since were acting in their capacity as *yeomen*, are now acting in that of *citizens*. But the indications are that the distinction will be ignored. Great and good men are taking strong ground for negro suffrage, especially at the North, and God in his providence may decree another war to *prove* to us that emancipation is not the equivalent or logical antecedent of enfranchisement. The great Union party, whose glory is to have saved the nation, and to have accomplished the former, may add to that glory and long remain the ruling power in this land, if it does not unwisely attempt the latter; if it does, its work will be undone or the black race exterminated. The cloud is now no bigger than a man's hand, and few seem willing or think it needful to scrutinize its portentous aspect. Gratitude for service rendered in the field; a mistaken application of the general fact of capacity; the influence of false or exaggerated moral sentiments; the immediate effect of the negro vote in giving a loyal element to State Governments; the influence of politicians looking to nothing but their present and private interests; the zeal of recent conversion always running to extremes; a blindness to the distinction between men and citizens, and various other influences, will so combine, it is to be feared, as to lead us into errors far more fatal than that of incorporating slavery into the body politic, as our fathers thought themselves compelled to do.

We should look at this matter with the eye of true statesmen, taking a view of the past and the future. Amendments are required in the Constitution in order to meet the new conditions by which we are surrounded. If the negro does not vote he must not be represented. The ratio of representation must be



applied to the white population, and in this case nothing would be feared from the late rebel element in Congress.

But these remarks have already been extended far beyond the original design, although touching only on the general features of the subject. The writer can have no hope of checking the current setting, as he believes, in a wrong direction; he can look for nothing more than the inward satisfaction, in this hour of peril, of having uttered a note of warning.

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